

Row of brick houses  
9, 11, 11-1/2 and 13 (Residences)  
East Pleasant Street,  
Baltimore, Maryland.

HABS No. Md. -43

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District of Maryland

Historic American Buildings Survey  
John H. Scarff, District Officer  
1012 Keyser Building, Baltimore, Md.

Row of brick houses  
NUMBERS 9, 11, 11-1/2 AND 15 (RESIDENCES)  
East Pleasant Street,  
Baltimore, Maryland.

OWNERS

Demolished 1936. The land is now the property of the Chesapeake & Potomac Telephone Company and rented for use as a parking lot.

DATE OF ERECTION

Number 15-1817  
Numbers 9 and 11 earlier  
Number 11-1/2 later

ARCHITECTS

Unknown

BUILDERS

Unknown

PRESENT CONDITION

Demolished 1936.

NUMBER OF STORIES

Two and three stories, basements and attics.

MATERIAL OF CONSTRUCTION

Brick with tin and shingle roofs, marble stoops iron rails, interior floor and partition; construction of wood.

OTHER EXISTING RECORDS

"Old Baltimore" by Mrs. Sioussatt- page 145.  
Three articles by Mrs. Flora Byrne, under the nom-de-plume "Grandmother" and entitled "Incidents of other days" and published in the Baltimore Sun in 1883. Land records.  
Etching by Dano Jackley of the rear of number 15.  
City directories.

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ROW OF BRICK HOUSES  
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ADDITIONAL DATA

The land records of Baltimore City list the property owners in 1810 of the south side of Pleasant Street between the west side of St. Paul Lane and the east side of a 20 foot alley as Judith C. Riddell, John Donaldson, James Barroll, Benjamin Rocaud and James Briscoe.

Mrs. Byrne, the daughter of Dr. James Smith writes; "During this first decade my father built his handsome house at the corner of Pleasant and St. Paul streets. Very few houses were in the neighborhood, and sand hills and gulleys surrounded them, while the streets were scarcely laid out.

"A description of a ball given by my father on his fiftieth birthday comes in place here. The ball-room was in the third story and was lighted by seven windows, warmed by two fireplaces. The guests, being received in the parlors, were escorted up stairs to the sound of the veritable Scotch bagpipes, a strolling company, dressed in Highland costume, being then in town. I believe they were engaged in compliment to my mother, who considered herself Scotch-Irish. The band of music was stationed in the room, the supper was laid out in the adjoining apartment."

That the year 1817 is the date of the erection of number 15 is somewhat substantiated by the city directories of 1816-1818. The directory of 1816 lists Dr. Smith's residence as 6 Chatham, now Fayette Street ( this house is also described by Mrs. Byrne) and the directory for 1817-18 lists as the corner of Pleasant Street and St. Paul Lane extended. The directories show that he lived there until 1829 or 30. There was no directory for 1830, but the 1831 issue has his residence on Franklin Street west of Charles.

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ADDITIONAL DATA Continued;

While Dr. Smith was an occupant of this house he may have entertained Lafayette there but we have not the slightest proof that he did. Mrs. Byrne in one of her articles describing the ball given by the citizens of Baltimore to Lafayette in 1824, which she and her father attended, mentioned her father inviting him to a "collation". She does not state the invitation was accepted but goes on to relate how Lafayette requested her father to procure for him an opossum and its young as he was making a collection of American Curiosities to take with him to Paris.

Number 15 was also known as the "Vaccine Institution" (directory 1922-23), Dr. Smith being a pioneer in the use of vaccine, and United States Agent for vaccination. It is possible that the small building at the south end of the property and facing St. Paul street was built by Dr. Smith for this purpose.

In 1830 Dr. Smith transferred the property to Colonel Jacob G. Davies, merchant; Mayor of Baltimore, 1844-1848 (Two Terms); and Postmaster of Baltimore 1853 (Pierce Administration).

There are no directories for 1830 but he probably occupied the house that year and in the directory of 1831 is listed at that address, and he lived there until 1846 or 1848 (Directories). Biographical sketches of Col. Davies are published in Coyle "Mayors of Baltimore" and the Baltimore Sun, December 8, 1857.

The next occupant of the house was Charles R. Pearce. While there are no directories for 1846 the Baltimore Equitable Society issued a policy for that year in his name and the directory for 1847 lists it as his dwelling. He was a merchant and a member of the firm of Birkhead and Pearce, and later of the firm of Pearce and Gray. We know from the directories that he lived there until 1860. No directories were published for the years 1861, 62 and 63, and sometime during this period he changed his residence.

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ADDITIONAL DATA Continued;

The directories for 1864-1866 list William F. Murdock and Fridge Murdock as occupants of this house, and from 1867 to 1871 list Dr. Russell Murdock as jointly occupying the house with them.

At the time of the demolition the Telephone company offered the Baltimore Museum of Art whatever details the Museum might desire. Those accepted were the complete doorway, including the stone steps and iron rail of number 11 and an interior archway of the same building. The exterior doorway of number 9, the wrought iron grilles or balconies of number 11-1/2, as well as interior trim and the main entrance doorway of number 15.

Although articles constantly refer to "The Pleasant Street Houses", most of the records extant refer to number 15, probably because the striking stepped gable to the east and the rear garden wall surmounted by the picturesque rear building with its two story porticoes were conspicuous landmarks. One could enter the garden which was at the first floor level from St. Paul street by a flight of stone steps. The stone wall along St. Paul street was surmounted by a brick parapet enclosing, enclosed the garden.

The architectural design and details of all four houses were extremely good and the name of Maxmillian Godefroy has been mentioned in connection with number 15.. The writer has seen no records to confirm this.

*John H. Scarff*

Rev. Nov. 5. 36 H.W.